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SDP
Slipping meeting

Mr. Marshall

As President of Tracy Wildlife Association, a sportsmen's club located at 1222 West Finck Road. Approximately ¼ mile West of Tracy Boulevard on Old River. I have several concerns involving the South Delta Improvements Program.

1. Navigation at the Control Structures
Tracy Wildlife Association has been chartered since 1937 as a non-profit club for the enhancement of South Delta Wildlife. Our 650 members, as well as guests and other local sportsman, are now confined behind the temporary barriers. A permanent barrier, without provisions for boat passage, will limit the use of our property and close a historically navigable waterway.
2. Destruction of Fisheries
Fishing for all traditional species inside of the control structures has declined steadily, each year the experimental barriers have been in place. I have personally seen dying baitfish as well as larger species including Striped Bass.
3. Loss of Natural Flow
Flows from Sugar Cut, West to the agricultural barrier on Old River are non-existent. A sandbar at the junction of Old River and Grantline canal blocks 100% of the historic channel. The blockage directs the flow above Sugar Cut into Grantline Canal, preventing circulation as described in the Temporary barriers mitigation plan.
4. Sedimentation
Channel depth has decreased yearly with the barriers in place, causing dangerous boating conditions and damaging many boats.
5. Poor Water Quality

Loss of historic channel depth and circulation has caused year-round reduction of water quality and oxygen content, as demonstrated by fish die-offs and increased mosquito activity. There is insufficient flow to displace agricultural drainage or outflows from the city of Tracy sewage treatment plant. Especially when the Head of Old River Barrier is place.

6. Exotic Plant Infestation

Most small sloughs and side channels are now completely blocked by Water Hyacinth and Periwinkle. This is not only a result of low flow and sedimentation, it further aggravates these problems. Some sloughs are in danger of disappearing altogether.

Without adequate circulation and a supply of fresh water, agricultural drainage and treated sewage from the city of Tracy is not being displaced or diluted. This is destroying an ecosystem known to be inhabited by endangered species, including the Western Pond Turtle, San Joaquin River Salmon and the Swainson's Hawk.

These conditions are in violation of current DWR use permits and require emergency dredging to mitigate barrier operations and prevent permanent damage to our ecosystem. The emergency dredging is required in the area of Boy Scout Island and the mouth of Sugar Cut. This, and alternate opening of the check valves on Grant Line Canal and Old River would improve water quality as a temporary measure.

Of the described alternatives I believe operable barriers with provisions for boat passage and channel dredging to historic depths, from the agricultural barriers to the San Joaquin River, is the only acceptable way to mitigate increased flows to CVP and restore environmental, fishery and riparian rights to residents of the South Delta. When the Head of Old River barrier is closed, pulse flows could be coordinated with agricultural pumping by opening all barriers for a short time while the gates at Clifton Court are open. This would flush sediment and agricultural drainage from the Old River channel and replenish dissolved oxygen supply for fisheries. This could be timed with the tide on the San Joaquin River, to not adversely affect dissolved oxygen levels at the Port of Stockton. Flow into Old River for a few hours at time should not significantly affect out-migrating Salmon Smolts.

If you would like additional information or comments please contact me by telephone or E-mail.

Sincerely,



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